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Prologue

A scream ecoed through the camp. Thunderfoot awoke, blinking sleepily. he looked around him. Everyone was still asleep. But why was he awake?*Something* had woke him up! Another scream rang in Thunderfoot's ears. *Daisyfur!,* he thought racing to the nursery. But his white tabby mate wasn't there. A screech made Thunderfoot flatten his ears. Then he noticed how fain the screech was. She must be outside camp! The flame-coloured tom raced out of camp, towards an oak. There was Daisyfur huddled up and crouching next to hr was Butterflymist, Lakeclans medicine cat. She's exausted, she wispered as Thunderfoot arrived, "a little white tom and another kit to come." Thunderfoot leant over his mate. "you can do this!" Daisyfur stared at him with blank eyes. Thunderfoot wondered if she heard him. Daisyfur gave an ear-splitting yell and a small wet bundle of ginger fur fell to the floor. The same moment, Butterflymist stiffened while licking the tom. "What is it? Are the kits alright?", Thunderfoot demanded. Butterflymist was staring into the forest. "Everything's fine", she mumbled. Thundefoot looked proudly at his queen and his kits, a white tom and a ginger she-cat. "Help me name them!", rasped Daisyfur, pointing at the tiny tom, "Milkkit."
"Milkkit", Thunderfoot echoed," and Gingerkit." Daisyfoot nodded weakly. Thunderfoot grabbed Gingerkit and let Daisyfoot, carrying Milkkit, lean on her. As they arrived in camp, Thunderfoot nudged her towards the nursery. He made sure the kits were suckling at their mothers belly and then he left. Then, he stalked towards Butterflymist, who was muttering under her breath. Thunderfoot took a deep breath and mewed:" I know there's something wrong. Tell me." Butterflymist looked at him with her beautiful blue eyes. " The moment Gingerkit was born, Starclan sent me a prophecy. *Light will shine ginger and save the clans*."

Chapter 1

Gingerkit opened her eyes and stretched. It had been four moons since they were born. Foxkit and Snowkit were already outside tumbling about. Lightfur had kitted a moon later than Daisyfur. Gingerkit thought it was great having so many kits to play with. Gingerkit leaped out of her nest, accidentally waking up Milkkit. She raced towards her denmates. As they arrived, Snowkit squealed with excitement." Let's play warriors!", she mewed. Foxkit was hopping up and down like a rabbit. "Yeah!", he purred. But Milkkit shook his head." I'm going to help Butterflymist mix some herbs." He padded off to the medicine-den. Gingerkit watched him sadly. Didn't he want to become a warrior? Daisyfur had appeared behind Gingerkit. "He'll make a great medicine cat.", she murmured lovingly. *Medicine cat!* Milkkit wanted to become a medicine cat? "No!", she jowled. Snowkit and Foxkit froze. "What?", Foxkit asked. Gingerkit shook her head." Nothing.", she mewed quietly. Snowkit nudged Foxkit." You can be Volcanoclan." Foxkit stared at her as if she had grown another head. "I don't want to be Volcanoclan!", she protested," you be them!" The siblings began to squabble. Gingerkit rolled her eyes." Let's play something else." Foxkit stopped, his paw in the air. The same moment, Milkkit came out of the medicine den. "Let's attack Milkkit!", Snowkit squealed. The three sprinted towards them. Foxkit leaped. Milkkit, who had never play-fighted with his denmates, collapsed beneath him. "Stop!", Gingerkit cried," you're hurting him!" Foxkit reluctantly let go. Milkkit stood up, looking annoyed. Without saying a word, he went back to the nursery. Gingerkit watched him disappear. "Let's attack Thunderfoot instead!", she suggested. They scrambled towards Thunderfoot and jumped on to his back, I sheathing their tiny claws. Thunderfoot staggered and fell to his side. Gingerkit squealed with excitement. "So you give up, Berryclan warrior?", Foxkit demanded. Thunderfoot nodded." We're goings to be the best warriors ever!", Gingerkit squeaked.

Chapter 2

Gingerkit nudged Milkkit. "Wake up!", she wispered., "Foxkit and Snowkit are waiting for us!" Milkkit blinked, his eyes glassy from sleep. "Don't.. Want.. To...Play.", he murmured, half asleep. "Oh come on! You're so strange sometimes, just play with us, just once! Milkkit sighed. "Ok. But only once." Gingerkit licked him happily and pushed him out of the nursery. Foxkit's eyes widened. "You brought Milkkit! Well done!", he squeaked. Gingerkit purred, noticing his dazzling green eyes. *Just like mine,* she thought. Caught in a daydream, she gazed at his eyes. "Gingerkit! Gingerkit!", Snowkit was impatiently waving her tail in front of Gingerkit's face. Gingerkit shook herself. Foxkit began to decide the roles. "Milkkit, you're Lakeclan, Gingerkit, you'll be Berryclan. Snowkit, Volcanoclan and I'll be Sedgeclan." Gingerkit nodded. "Attack!", Foxkit leaped on top of Gingerkit. Caught unaware, she fell over. "You're my prisoner now!", he squeaked. Gingerkit sat down, watching the others playfight. She she saw Foxkit's fluffy fur gleam in the sun. *It's pretty...* Foxkit had already captured Milkkit and was rolling around with Snowkit. That moment, the dawn patrol arrived, carrying several mice. "Hunting good then?", Stonegray asked, whilst taking a mouse. Littlescar nodded. "We found a whole nest!" The four kits scamperd towards the food. Milkkit settled down with a mouse. Gingerkit stared longingly at the mouse. It was her favourite food but all the mice had been taken by warriors, so there was none left. Milkkit looked up and noticed her longing gaze." Share?", he invited. Gratefully, Gingerkit began to eat. "You like him don't you?", Milkkit mewed.
"Like who?"
"Foxkit."
"What? Why?"
"I've noticed the way you look at him."
Gingerkit glared at him. "Don't say that! he's just a denmate." Milkkit looked smug. " You two would have the cutest kits!", he teased. Gingerkit hissed with frustration and ran out of camp without thinking. She ran past a big oak and a singing bird. She kept on running. *I don't like Foxkit! well, maybe a little. So what? All*

*warriors have mates, s*he thought. Suddenly she realised how mouse-brained it was to run off. She decided to go back. But... "I'm lost!", she wailed. She ran around, scared. She tripped over a root, falling onto the moist floor. A mysterious voice sounded behind her. "What do we have here?", it sneered.

Chapter 3

Gingerkit turned around. Behind her was a dark tabby tom, who was fading away slowly. Gingerkit, who was frightened out of her fur, slowly walked backwards. She crashed into a tree and fell onto her belly. "Mouse-dung!" The fading cat purred. "Need any help?" Gingerkit nodded. "I'm lost" Then: "Why are you fading?", she asked curiously. "Are you a Starclan cat?" "Maybe.", he said. "I'm Cedarfrost. And you?"
Gingerkit thought he looked quite friendly. "I'm Gingerkit from Lakeclan!", she squeaked. Cedarfrost nodded. "Let me show you the way home.", he suggested. "You could tell me about your life here." Together with Gingerkit, he went. Gingerkit enthusiastically told him about Moonstar, her leader, Foxkit, the prey and what they did all day. Cedarfrost listened carefully. "And who is Foxkit's mother?", he asked carefully. "Lightfur", Gingerkit mewed, "She's really nice!" Cedarfrost stiffened. "You mustn't trust Lightfur!", he hissed. "She killed a Berryclan warrior on a border patrol!" Gingerkit's eyes widened. "Really?", she whimpered. Cedarfrost nodded. "I don't mean to scare you, but I don't want you to get hurt!" For a while they walked silently next to each other. Then, Cedarfrost stopped walking. "There's your camp.", He mewed. "I'll leave you here." "No!", Gingerkit protested. "Come and meet my friends!" But Cedarfrost shook his head. "They won't be able to see me.", he mewed sadly. "But if you like, I'll visit you in your dreams." Gingerkit nodded excitedly. Cedarfrost dipped his head. "But don't tell anyone you saw me!" ,he pleaded.
"O-Ok. Why?" Gingerkit was slightly confused. But the dark tom had already dissapeared. Slowly, she padded into camp. Milkkit raced towards her. "I'm sorry!", he panted, "I didn't mean to hurt your feelings!" At first, Gingerkit didn't know what he was talking about. Then, she remembered why she ran away in the first place. "It's ok.", she mewed, playfully flicking her tail over his ears. Milkkit purred and set off towards the nursery. "You're not going to be a warrior are you?", Gingerkit asked. Milkkit shook his head, sadly. "I'm sorry. but I'm fascinated by herbs, you see." Gingerkit didn't see. But she didn't say anything either. Milkkit wasn't finished yet:

"But I will play warriors with you again. That was fun!", He purred at the thought. Outside the nursery was Lightfur, licking a protesting Foxkit. When she saw Gingerkit she rushed over. " Where have you been? Daisyfur and Thunderfoot have been worried sick!" Gingerkit remembered what Cedarfrost had said about her. Without saying anything, she rushed into the nursery.

Chapter 4

"Let all cats old enough to catch prey gather around this rock!" Gingerkit, who was practicing her hunting crouch with Volepaw, ran to the high-rock. "Surely it must be our apprentice ceremony!", she wispered to Milkkit, "I mean, we're already seven moons old!" Moonstar, a pretty white and black dappled she-cat, looked down at her clan. "Two apprentices in this clan, are ready to become warriors. Volepaw, Pondpaw, stap forward.", Gingerkit's tail drooped. She began to draw lines in the dust with her claw. Before she knew it, the clan was already calling: "Voleclaw! Pondfish!" Gingerkit joined in halfheartedly. Moonstar was about to jump off the rock, when Gingerkit suddenly felt angry. Very angry. "Stop, she jowled, "Me and Milkkit are already seven moons old. What did we do wrong? Why aren't we apprentices yet?" A ripple of gasps went through the cats. "Gingerkit!", Daisyfur said shocked. Moonstar didn't look angry. "My apologies", she mewed. "But I didn't want you alone in the apprentice den."
"What's wrong with Milkkit?",Voleclaw mewed. Moonstar looked at him sternly. Voleclaw fell silent. She turned back to Gingerkit. "But now Foxkit and Snowkit are six moons old, you can become apprentices." Moonstar made sure everyone was still there, and then carried on." Milkkit, Gingerkit, Snowkit, Foxkit. Step forward." Gingerkit's heart soared as she followed her denmates onto the rock. "Foxkit, from this day onwards until you are a warrior, you will be called Foxpaw. Your mentor will be Thunderfoot. Mentor him well." Thunderfoot, Gingerkit's father and Lakeclan's deputy, dipped his head respectfully.
"Snowkit. You will be Snowpaw. Berryflower, your mentor was Littlefoot. He was brave and loyal. Pass these things on to Snowpaw." "Who was Littlefoot?", Gingerkit wispered to Milkkit. Milkkit shrugged." Probally some elder that died before we were born."
"Gingerkit."
Milkkit nudged her." Go on!"
Gingerkit made one step forward.
"You may be young, but you have a big heart. Let that help you

when you're in trouble." Moonstar's brilliantly blue eyes were looking directly at Gingerkit. "You will be called Gingerpaw. Your mentor will be Littlescar. Littlescar, make her a warrior that will lead Lakeclan to greatness." Proudly, Gingerpaw stepped back.
"Milkkit. You have the desire to become a medicine cat."
Gingerpaw heard murmurs under the cats. Not many had known.
"Butterflymist is one of the best medicine cats I've met. She will pass her knowledge on to you. Until you are ready to be a full medicine cat, you will be named Milkpaw."
Cheers rose from the crowd. "Snowpaw! Foxpaw! Gingerpaw! Milkpaw!"
Gingerpaw puffed out her chest as she touched noses with Littlescar, her new mentor. They were finally apprentices!

Chapter 5

Gingerpaw happily bounded after her mentor. "What are we doing first? Are we going hunting? How do you hunt? What's the easiest prey to catch? Or are we..." Littlescar purred."I think the first thing you need to learn is to be a little quieter. As if there would be any prey around now!" Gingerpaw stopped chattering and murmured a 'sorry'. Littlescar smiled. "No worries. I was going to show you the territory." Gingerpaw bounced around with exitement. Littlescar led her to a spot, which smelled disgusting, thought Gingerpaw. "This is the border to Volcanoclan.", Littlescar mewed. "Be sure to remember that smell!" Littlescar showed her around and soon they had left the clan borders behind them.
"And finally, this is the border to the twoleg place."
Gingerpaw looked thoughtful. "I wonder what kittypets are like!", she thought out loud. Littlescar was about to reply something, when a mew sounded from the border.
"Hi!"
Gingerpaw and Littlescar jumped. "Who's there?", Littlescar called sharply. A plump tabby she-cat ,with a blue thing around her neck, appeared. "Hi!', she mewed again," I'm Rainbow! Are you real *wild* cats? Wow! What do you do all day?" Gingerpaw nodded and launched into a detailed explaniation about how they lived, what they did and ate. She was about to tell her about the system of their names, when Littlescar interrupted." It was very nice talking and all", he mewed meaningfully," but we'd better go." Gingerpaw bid a farewell to Rainbow and traipsed after Littlescar." Don't ever talk to kittypets again!", he scolded. Gingerpaw hisssed and stormed of. As she arrived at camp, she noticed a cluster of cats around Redblossom." What's happening?", she asked Snowpaw. Snowpaw smiled." She's expecting Snakecreeks kits!" Gingerpaw saw Snakecreek affectionly nuzzling Redblossom's cheek, his eyes bright with exitement. "That's great news!", Gingerpaw wispered exitedly,' Maybe, just maybe, by the time they're 'paws, we will be ready for our first apprentices!"

Chapter 6

Gingerpaw yawned as she heard Littlescar calling for her. She padded out of the apprentice den." What are we doing today?", she asked. She had been an apprentice for several sunrises and had learned the fore-paw slash, had perfected their hunting crouch, collected moss, the only thing Gingerpaw hadn't tried yet was... "Hunting." Littlescar spoke her thoughts. Gingerpaw bounded after camp, Foxpaw and Snowpaw joining them on the way. Suddenly, a vole scuttled past them. Not hearing Littlescar's desperate whispers of 'don't!', Gingerpaw darted forward in attempt to catch the vole. But with an alarmed squeak, it ran away into the darkness. "Mousedung!", Gingerpaw exclaimed. Littlescar shook his head." Maybe we should work on your technique instead.", he mewed. The three apprentice looked disappointed, but no one raid anything. They worked on their hunting crouch, their swift leaping and their creeping up on prey. Gingerpaw was very proud with herself as they headed home. She noticed how Foxpaw's beautiful fur seemed redder than normal. Snowpaw was chatting away, but Gingerpaw wasn't listening, gazing at Foxpaw's fur. A rustling sound made Snowpaw prick her ears and dive into the bushes. A mouse shot out, Snowpaw right behind it. The mouse crashed headfirst into Gingerpaw. Gingerpaw's instinct told her to kill that mouse, *now*. But guiltily remembering that it was Snowpaw's mouse, she let it run back towards Snowpaw. Snowpaw ,surprised, pounced on top of the mouse, killing it with a quick bite."Great catch!", Littlescar praised. Then he turned to Gingerpaw." Why didn't you catch it?", he asked. Gingerpaw stared at her feet and muttered something about it being Snowpaw's prey. Littlescar sighed." It doesn't matter who's prey it is asking as we catch it!" Gingerpaw didn't dare to look up."Sorry.", she muttered. As they walked back, Foxpaw bounded up to Gingerpaw." Hey, guess what's tonight?", he purred." Ummm.. Do t know.", Gingerpaw blushed under her fur. Foxpaw purred." Think of the moon..." Suddenly it hit her." The gathering! It's full moon!" Foxpaw nodded excitedly. Together, they bounded off towards camp, leaving a confused and angry Snowpaw behind.

Chapter 7

Gingerpaw excitedly darted between her clanmates. Her first gathering! She raced ahead, only stopping at Moonstar's stern words." Gingerpaw!", she mewed," I know you are exited, but please stay with the rest!" Gingerpaw fell back, next to Milkpaw. They hadn't really talked since their apprentice ceremony. Gingerpaw opened her mouth to say something, when a big yawn stopped her. Milkpaw purred. "Sounds like you need more sleep!", he teased. Gingerpaw smiled. She had spent plenty of time in her nest, but ever since she had met Cedarfrost in the woods, she had spent time with him inher dreams. Gingerpaw told him all about her friends and clanmates and Cedarfrost told her who to be careful of. She now knew that Snakecreek's father was a murderer, Redblossom wasn't actually expecting kits *yet*, just trying to get attention and that Blackear is actually a banned Sedgeclan warrior. Gingerpaw was thankful for the advise to stay clear of them. After a while, what Gingerpaw assumed what fourtrees was. She forgot Moonstar's words and raced ahead, Milkpaw, Foxpaw and Snowpaw by her side. This time no one stopped them. Gingerpaw could smell many scents of different cats. Littlescar told her to find a place to sit. As everyone was seated, the leaders clambered on to the trees. "Let the gathering begin!", a light brown she-cat called. A Gray tom stepped forward." Volcanoclan is well", he called. Gingerpaw recognised him from the elders story's, Ashstar." Prey is good and we have no kittypets bothering us. He stepped back. Next, the light brown she-cat, Gingerpaw assumed was Meadowstar took his place." Sedgeclan has three new apprentices!", she called," Frozenpaw, Falconpaw and Mossypaw!" The cats of all clans began to call their names. Gingerpaw spotted them, their chests puffed out proudly. Next, a white she-cat began to speak. *Whitestar*, Gingerpaw thought." Berryclan has had a badger attack. But we have fully recovered and there has been no serious injurys." And finally, Moonstar's turn." Cats of the clans", she began," Lakeclan had two new warriors and four new apprentices. Voleclaw, Pondfish, Foxpaw, Snowpaw, Gingerpaw and Milkpaw. Milkpaw is our new medicine cat apprentice. The crowd erupted into a volley of cheers. Gingerpaw

proudly held her head up. The leaders jumped from the trees, leaving the cats to share the news. Gingerpaw anxiously wondered around, trying to find a clanmate. She bumped into a black cat, recognising her as one of the new Sedgeclan apprentices."Hello", she said nervously," I'm Gingerpaw." The black cat looked up. Gingerpaw was astonished to see that she had purple eyes. " I..I'm Frozenpaw!", she stammered. Gingerpaw asked her how it was like to live in Segdeclan. And soon they were in the middle of a intense conversation about the clans. Suddenly, Frozenpaw turned around." I have to go.", she muttered," I can hear Meadowstar calling." Gingerpaw said 'bye' before being dragged away by Littlescar. On the way home, she couldn't stop thinking about her, even when Foxpaw with his pretty eyes walked beside her. She had liked Frozenpaw. She was already dreaming about them being best friends. *I mean, it's forbidden to have mates in other clans, but she's a she-cat too! It can't be forbidden to have a best friend in a different clan, can it?*

Chapter 8

Gingerpaw opened her eyes. She was surrounded by trees and the smell was strange. *Starclan,* she thought happily." Gingerpaw, over here!" Gingerpaw saw Cedarfrost beaconing her to come over. Cedarfrost smiled." Hello!", he mewed," how are you getting on?" "Great! Yesterday I had my first gathering! I talked to a apprentice called Frozenpaw! She's so nice!"

Cedarfrost frowned."Frozenpaw you say? Her mother is a kittypet, you know." Gingerpaw jumped to her paws with surprise. She decided to change the subject. "Redblossom's belly seems to be getting large. Are you sure she isn't expecting kits?" Cedarfrost looked like he was struggling for words." Umm... Well.. I was wrong.", he finally confessed." She is expecting kits. But these kits will be evil and should not be born!" Cedarfrost hissed. Suddenly, he pricked his ears." You must wake up!", he wispered," Redblossom's kits are coming!" Gingerpaw was confused."But you said these kits are bad!" Cedarfrost uncomftarbly shifted his feet." Well.. You should probably wake up anyway. It's morning!" Gingerpaw wondered what he was hiding. But before she could say anything, she woke up with a start. She looked around her. She remembered what Cedarfrost had said and rushed towards the nursery. The nursery was surrounded by almost all the cats in the clan. Gingerpaw couldn't see anything. She wasn't sure if she envied Milkpaw for being able to help or not. After a while, she got a glance of Snakecreek licking a tiny brown kit. She could hear Redblossom screaming and panting. She saw Foxpaw looking disgusted." I'm so glad I'm not a she-cat." Gingerpaw purred at these words.
"Since when has she been kitting?"
"Since dawn."
Gingerpaw heard a loud yell and then the screaming and panting stopped. Gingerpaw slowly walked towards the nursery. Milkpaw padded out." Two toms!", he announced. Gingerpaw managed to slip in and see them. Redblossom and Snakecreek were naming them." Bouncekit and Leafkit.", Redblossom decided. Gingerpaw

sneaked out again. Maybe one day she would have kits! And who knows, maybe Foxpaw will be the father!

Chapter 9

The next morning, Gingerpaw wasn't woken up by Littlescar, but by Moonstar. She smiled." Are Snowpaw and Foxpaw still asleep?", she asked sweetly," we're going to the Moonstone. Go get some travelling herbs." *The Moonstone*! She had forgotten that every apprentice had to travel to the Moonstone. She bounded off to the medicine den. Milkpaw padded out." We're going to the Moonsto..", Gingerpaw stopped. Milkpaw's eyes were glassy, like he hadn't slept all night. His fur was ungroomed, and when he spoke, his mew was husky."Butterflymist has greencough.", he wispered," and I don't know what to do!" Inside, Gingerpaw was panicking. *Butterflymist had greencough?* But instead of showing her fears, she lay her tail over his shoulder." You're the best medicine cat apprentice ever!", she murmured," you'll figure this out!" But Milkpaw just sighed. After a moment of silence, he changed the subject." You're going to the Moonstone? You'll love it!" Gingerpaw had forgotten that Milkpaw had already been to the Moonstone many times. He disappeared onto his den, returning with some herbs." Swallow them whole.", he commanded. Gingerpaw obeyed, nearly gagging on the horrible taste. A cough made Milkpaw flatten his ears." I'd better check on her.", he said, hurrying into the den. Gingerpaw scurried off to find Moonstar.

Gingerpaw was almost bursting with excitement she, Foxpaw, Snowpaw and Moonstar were stranding in front of Mothermouth. Slowly, Moonstar lead them in. It was pitch- black. For a while, everyone walked silently. Gingerpaw wondered what it would be like to meet her ancestors. She had only ever met Cedarfrost. Suddenly, Foxpaw stopped. Gingerpaw walked into his hindquarters. Foxpaw was backing out." I need to get out of here...", he muttered, his voice scared. Gingerpaw called for Moonstar, but she didn't reply. So she squeeezed herself next to Foxpaw and guided him on. "Hurry up!", they could hear Moonstar," it's already high-moon! Gingerpaw stepped into the cave. It was beautiful. The moon lit up the stone, making it look dazzling. Somehow knowing what to do, Gingerpaw pressed her nose to the stone. She opened

her eyes. No trees, no smell, completely different to where she meeted Cedarfrost. A tabby with stars glittering around her paws, stepped towards her. "Gingerpaw.", she greeted," I'm Echofeather, Lakeclan's medicine cat before Butterflymist." Gingerpaw looked around curiously." I've been in Starclan before", she mewed," where's the funny smell, and the trees?" Echofeather looked at her alarmed." That is not Starclan. That is the dark forest."
"What's so bad about the dark forest?"
But before she could reply, she woke up, her nose far away from the Moonstone. Moonstar beckoned them." Let's go.", she mewed roughly. If Gingerpaw's thoughts were correct, she had been dragged away from the stone. But why?

Chapter 10

Gingerpaw was playing with Leafkit and Bouncekit the fresh snow, when Voleclaw burst into camp. "Sedgeclan!", he gasped," They're attacking!" Moonstar quickly gathered all cats." Voleclaw, Pondfish, Snakecreek, Gingerpaw, Snowpaw, Foxpaw, Daisyfoot, Blackear and Lightfur, you're in Thunderfoot's patrol. Go now and fight. Deerflight, Tigercloud, Rosefur, Mintflash, Willowlight, Nightheart and Snowfeather, you're in my patrol. We will defend the camp." Gingerpaw scampered off with the rest. The older warriors flung themselves on Sedgeclan. Gingerpaw knew that Sedgeclan wanted to steal their territory, because she could smell the scent lines a little bit further forward. She saw Foxpaw battling with a senior warrior- *how brave!* But a small, black cat was sneaking on behind him. Gingerpaw leaped on top of her." Stay away from him!", she growled. The black cat turned around. It was Frozenpaw. Gingerpaw instantly let go. They had talked together a lot, and they quite liked each other. Frozenpaw thankfully glanced at her and ran away. Gingerpaw saw Foxpaw struggling beneath the senior warrior." Ha! Think again before you attack me again!" Gingerpaw snarled and launched herself towards him, battering his gray pelt. Foxpaw scratched his belly with his hind paws. The Sedgeclan warrior yowled with pain, twisted and threw Gingerpaw to the floor. Foxpaw bit his ankle. The gray tom snarled and tried to snap at him. Gingerpaw felt his grip loosening slightly. She took the chance, hitting his nose. He snarled a final time, but then fled. Foxpaw leaped into the air." We did it! We're a great team!" Gingerpaw purred." Let's go and battle more warriors!" Together, they battled two apprentices and another warrior. Then, Segdeclan drew drew back." We won!", Gingerpaw realised. Happily, everyone limped back to camp. Gingerpaw was in a very good mood. As they finnaly arrived in camp, she shouted:" We won! We won!", several cats joined in. But the cats in camp were all very gloomy." W..what's wrong?", Gingerpaw asked, not really wanting to know. Milkpaw was the first to speak. His voice was full of grief, and, was that love? "Butterflymist died.", he choked.

Chapter 11

"Starclan look down on these apprentices. They have worked hard to come this far. Three of them fought in a battle, and one has healed cats for many moons. Gingerpaw, Snowpaw, Milkpaw and Foxpaw, do you promise to uphold the secrets of your clan, even at the cost of your lives?"
"I do."
"I do."
"I do."
"I do."
Moonstar's voice sounded over all the cats. Gingerpaw was almost hopping with excitement. It was just after the battle, so they still had their injurys. "Then by Starclan's power, I give you the names Gingerlight, Snowpelt, Milkfur and Foxtail. Your clan honours you for your bravery and your loyal hearts." Gingerlight licked Moonstar's shoulder as she touched her head. "Gingerlight! Snowpelt! Milkfur! Foxtail!" The clan's call made Gingerlight puff out her chest proudly. Then, she leapt from the rock. Finnally a warrior! She walked into Milkfur's den to get some nasty scratches treated. Milkfur grabbed some ointment and began to smear it on her wounds. "How did Foxtail do?", he asked mischievously. Gingerlight didn't take the hint and chattered on about how brave Foxtail was. She only stopped, when she noticed that Milkfur had gone. He returned with some cobwebs. "You fancy him, don't you?", he wispered cautiously. Gingerlight could understand his caution. Last time
he asked, it hadn't turned out very well. But this time she was going to be truthful. "Yes.", she wispered," but..." Foxtail walked into the den." Hello!", he mewed cheerfully," I need some ointment for my scratches!"Gingerlight shut her mouth immediately. Milkfur pushed her gently out of the medicine den. "Go on.", he murmured in a strange tone. Gingerlight left the den, suspicious. She knew that tone. He was up to something. She couldn't help eavesdropping on him and Foxtail.
"She really likes you, you know."
"Who? Gingerlight?"

"Yes."
Gingerlight heard Foxtail sigh." So do I", he confessed," but I don't know how to tell her."

The sky began to darken. It was time for their vigil. Gingerlight settled herself next to Foxtail. Snowpelt was on Foxtail's other side. Gingerlight felt Foxtail's gaze hit her. She turned her head and their gazes locked. Even though they couldn't speak, and they didn't speak anyway, Gingerlight knew that Foxtail's eyes were trying to say something. *Will you be my mate*? In reply she winded her tail around his. Foxtail purred softly and rested his chin on her head. Gingerlight snuggled against his chest. Ignoring Snowpelt's surprised looks, they held vigil together on that cold, snowy day.

Chapter 12

Gingerlight walked along the border, gasping. She was on Thunderfoot's border patrol, and sudden pains kept shooting through her stomach like little feet pushing against her belly from the inside. Foxtail appeared at her side. "What's the matter?", he asked, sounding concerned. Gingerlight pressed her muzzle against her mate's. "Bellyache.", she muttered.

"You should go to Milkfur afterwards."

"Mmh."

They were patrolling along the kittypet border, as a familiar voice spoke. "Hi! It's me!" Gingerlight recognised the other cat as Rainbow, the kittypet she had talked with as an apprentice. Rainbow cheerfully continued: "I've decided to join your clan", she chattered," I'm bored of life as a house cat." Gingerlight uncomfortably shifted her feet. "I'll bring you to Moonstar.", she mewed. Foxtail nuzzled her ear in farewell. Gingerlight told Rainbow to follow her. She arrived at camp, greeted by a volley of gasps. She ignored them, stalking to Moonstar's den. She nodded towards Rainbow. "Go in there. Tell Moonstar what you want. Make it sound convincing." Rainbow nodded earnestly. Gingerlight felt the pains in her stomach again. She padded to Milkfur, who was grooming his fur in the sunshine, and spoke. "My stomach hurts!", she managed to say, "it's like little feet are kicking me!" Milkfur nodded thoughtfully, taking her into his den. He prodded her stomach with a claw, pressed an ear to it, felt her stomach, and finally, gave her some... borage? "Eat that", he commanded. Gingerlight obediently gulped the leaves down, pulling a face. "What's... What's wrong with me? Isn't Borage for queens or something?" Milkfur purred and purred. It sounded like he couldn't stop. As he finally stopped her smiled at Gingerlight. "Mousebrain! Can't you guess? You're expecting kits!" Gingerlight gaped at him. "Kits? But... Ive only been a warrior for half a moon!" Milkfur nodded, seriously. "They're due in a quartermoon ." Gingerlight felt

dizzy and nearly collapsed. That meant she had already been expecting kits as an apprentice! Suddenly, Milkfur showed her a wide smile. "You'd better break the news to Foxtail. He'll be happy." Gingerlight stumbled out of the den, almos blind with *worry*. What would everyone say? What would *Moonstar* say? Not looking where she was going, she collided into a cat. Looking up, she saw it was. Foxtail. He saw her worried face and laid his tail over her shoulders. "What's the matter?", he asked, "you look, smell, sound *and* act worried!" Gingerlight quickly glanced around her to make sure no one was listening. "I'm expecting kits."

"Really? That's great! I'm going to be a father! I'm so proud! What's the problem?"

"They're due in... In a moon."

Foxtail's mouth dropped open. "But that means..." Gingerlight turned away. She was expecting to hear that he didn't want to be her mate anymore. But he twisted his tail around hers and wispered: "I can't wait!" He have her a sort of encouraging smile as she took a deep breath and stepped into Moonstar's den. Rainbow nearly overran her, yelling 'I'm an apprentice!' Gingerlight saw Moonstar licking a paw. She looked up. "Ah, yes. Gingerlight.", she began, "I was wondering when you would visit me." Gingerlight cocked her head, confused. *What did she mean?* Moonstar's eyes glittered. "You're expecting kits. It's gradually becoming visible." Gingerlight stared at the floor. "I'm sorry." Moonstar's tone became stern. "Since you broke the code, there will be consequences. I was going to give you Bouncekit to mentor. Now I must find someone else suitable." Her voice softened. "You will be a great mother." Gingerlight dipped her head leaving the den. Inside, she was bubbling with exitement. She was expecting kits!

Chapter 13

Gingerlight gasped. Milkfur was crouching beside her. She had started kitting not so long ago and it *hurt*. A wave of pain passed through her body. Gingerlight yelled in pain. She struggled to breath and she could see stars before her eyes. Milkfur felt her belly. Gingerlight felt little feet pushing against her. "Geroff!", she rasped at Milkfur. But Milkfur just chuckled. "Three or four kits, I think." Foxtail appeared at the entrance of the nursery. "How's it going?", he asked, sounding worried. Milkfur kneaded Gingerlight's stomach softly. "Not bad", he mewed," she'll survive." *She'll survive? That sounded like I'm hanging on to life by a mouselength!* Suddenly, pain shot through her like an arrow and a kit slithered into her nest. Gingerlight lifted her head to see it. An orange she-cat. The pain passed through her again, and the next kit was a lovely black and white she-cat. Milkfur pushed his front paws to her tummy. "Two more!", he announced. And soon, another orange, but tom, and a Gray- blue tabby joined their littermates. Gingerlight's pain ceased slowly. Foxtail stepped into her nest and watched his kits proudly. "They're lovely!" Gingerlight smiled. They definitely were. "Let's name them." Foxtail nudged the black one. "Nightkit. And the tabby Dreamkit." Gingerlight managed to nod her head. "The orange she-cat Sunkit and the tom Flamekit." Foxtail lay down next to her. "Get some rest", he purred," you must be tired." She was. Even though her newborn kits were vigorously suckling at her belly, she fell into a deep sleep.

She woke up to see that Nightkit and Sunkit had already opened their eyes. Gingerlight proudly licked their tiny heads. She softly nudged Dreamkit and Flamekit, and soon they opened their eyes for the first time. She watched them race out of the nursery to see 'the world'. "Don't get into any trouble!", Gingerlight called behind them. But Redblossom laughed. "All kits get into trouble. They can't seem to do anything else." Her own kits, Bouncekit and Leafkit, were close to six moons. They should be announced 'paws any day

now. Gingerlight felt sadness rise in her. Bouncekit would of been her apprentice. She assumed Foxtail would get her. Well, at least she had her kits. She went outside to check in them. All four of them were crowded around the elder Stonegray, who must be telling them one of his remarkable stories. She felt Redblossom step out beside her. For a split second, they watched the kits sit. Then, Redblossom murmured: "Cute little furballs." Gingerlight smiled. "I know."

Chapter 14

Gingerlight lay in the sun, enjoying the last rays of sunshine. Sound of paws scattered around her, followed by an "oomph". She looked up to see Moonstar on the floor. She dragged her kits away from Moonstar and dipped her head. "I'm so sorry." Moonstar schook her head. "It's ok. I've come to ask you something."
"What?"
"Will you come to the gathering? Redblossom has agreed to look after the kits."
Gingerlight remembered that she hadn't been announced as a warrior yet. She had to go. "Of course."
Moonstar told her to wait by the camp entrance just before moonhigh. She disappeared from the den.

Gingerlight patiently waited for everyone else.
Foxtail, Snowpelt and Milkfur were also going. Soon, all cats were there and they set off. Foxtail walked over to Gingerlight. "I'm so proud of you", he began," I mean, you're coping so well with the kits!" Gingerlight purred. "I love you." Foxtail wrapped his tail around hers. "I love you too." The journey to the four trees had gone so fast, that Gingerlight felt like they had only just set off. She sat down by a Volcanoclan elder, looking out for Frozenpaw, or, was she a warrior as well now? The gathering began. Volcanoclan had a new litter of kits, Riverkit and Darkkit. Berryclan had nothing to report. Sedgeclan had three new warriors, Mossyrock, Falconheart and (to Gingerlight's delight) Frozengaze. And finally-" We have four new warriors. Gingerlight, Foxtail, Snowpelt. And our medicine cat apprentice Milkpaw is now Milkfur." The four clans cheered. Gingerlight couldn't help sticking out her chest proudly. Now, the moment Gingerlight had been fearing. "We also have some new kits. We welcome them to our clan!" Gingerlight relaxed. Moonstar hadn't mentioned who's kits they were. Suddenly, a tail tapped her from behind. Gingerlight swivelled around. It was Frozengaze. Gingerlight laughed. Frozengaze smiled widely. "Who had kits? Bet they're cute!" Gingerstar stared at her paws. "There my kits." Frozengaze gasped. "But...that's not possible!" Gingerlight turned

away and muttered something about 'Moonstar calling'. Frozengaze called behind her but she continued running, to embarrassed to apologise.

Chapter 15

Gingerlight opened her eyes to see a dark, musty forest. She looked around, hoping to spot Cedarfrost. She hadn't seen him for a long time. "Gingerpaw!" A voice laughed behind him. Gingerlight twirled around and automatically corrected:"Gingerlight." Cedarfrost smiled. "Oh. So you're a warrior now?" Gingerlight leaped into the air and completed a complicated move, landing safely on all four paws. "Yup." Cedarfrost nodded. "Impressive." Gingerlight was unsure. Should she tell him about the kits? She decided not to. But she ask Cedarfrost if she could look around. Cedarfrost wistfully shook his head. "You're not ready." Gingerlight felt the anger rise in her. "I am a warrior!"
"So what?"
Gingerlight felt like snarling. A little more respect wouldn't harm! Cedarfrost licked his fur clean. "So who else has been made a warrior."
Gingerlight told him. Cedarfrost said nothing, deep in thoughts. "Foxtail", he mewed finally,"is a spy. Of Volcanoclan." This time Gingerlight screeched loudly. There was no way Foxtail was a spy! "He's my mate and the father of my kits.", she said fiercely, "there was no way he would do that!" She ran off, into the darkness, dead to the calls behind her.

Gingerlight ran and ran. She felt bad. She had thought Cedarfrost was good, the dark forest was good. And she had thought her clanmates were evil. Mehr eyes lost it's mischievous spark as she continued running. She would never, ever come back. She stumbled and fell, just like when she had first met Cedarfrost. She picked herself up. She had thought Cedarfrost was her friend. But all he was was a liar. "Gingerlight? Gingerlight!" A loud mew woke her. It was Daisyfur. "You were groaning in your sleep. I was worried." Gingerlight's joints felt like they had run for ages. They probally had. Warmth towards her mother rushed through her body. She muttered something about a bad dream, turned over and drifted off into a deep, dreamless sleep.

Chapter 16

Gingerlight was woken by the sound of "all cats old enough to catch birds, gather around the highrock!" Gingerlight stretched and yawned, and Sunkit nervously asked if they could come too. "We can't catch any birds yet." Gingerlight shook her head. "It's fine." Her kits happily pranced after her. As she sat down by the edge of the rock, she felt her belly rumble. She saw the empty fresh-kill pile. Leaf-bare had definitely begun. Moonstar yowled for silence. "Two kits are ready to become apprentices. Leafkit, Bouncekit, please come here." Redblossom gasped. "Already?" She flung herself on her kits, grooming them. Leafkit struggled beneath her and said:"We're fine!" As Redblossom finally let them go they bounded up on to the rock. Moonstar smiled at them. "Leafkit. From this day on, you will be known as Leafpaw. Your mentor will be Foxtsil. Let him make you the warrior I know you can be." Leafkit,no,Leafpaw nodded. Moonstar turned to Bouncekit. "You will be known as Bouncepaw. Your mentor will be Snowpelt." The clan cheered. "Leafpaw! Bouncepaw!" Gingerlight halfheartedly cheered*, remembering Moonstars words. Since you broke the code, there will be consequences. I was going to give you Bouncekit to mentor, but now I must find someone else.* Gingerlight sighed. Were kits better than an apprentice? A little voice in her head said:"No." But Gingerlight shook her head. She loved her kits dearly. The cold wind blew around her. She shivered. It began to thunder. "Great. A storm.", Thunderfoot whispered. Gingerlight closed her eyes, trying to imagine the warm sun... She could almost feel the warmth on her back.. *Wait.* Her eyes snapped open. She could really feel the warmth. Suddenly, a lightning bolt struck the camp. Orange flames shot into the air. "Fire!",Gingerlight screamed, "run!" The cats scattered. Gingerlight grabbed Nightkit and Flamekit by their scruffs and made Sunkit and Dreamkit jump on her back. She ran after Foxtail, hoping the fire wouldn't reach them. Suddenly, the fire overtook them. Gingerlight scrambled to the left, getting out if it's way, but Foxtail disappeared into the flames. "Foxtail!", Gingerlight screeched. But the fire spread and she tried to find a safe place. She saw a river, and with a leap, she was in the water,

safe. She turned around to see if her two daughters were still on her back. They were. Her ears flattened as she heard screams. She had to help. She told her kits not to move a mouselength and ran off. She ran into the blazing heat. She couldn't see a thing. She had to return to the river. She crouched down into the water and waited for the fire to end.

Chapter 17

After a long time, the fire died down. Gingerlight saw the moon schlimm wrong in the sky. She had been here for a long time. Telling her kits to follow her, she decided to find everyone. Little coughs sounded behind her. The smoke was making them cough. Gingerlight wasn't sure what to do. She looked into the burned forest and suddenly felt sick. The floor was covered with bodys. Dead bodys. Moonstar, Bouncepaw, Redblossom.. They were all here. Dead. Gingerlight saw a orange body next to a white one. *No!* But it was. Her parents. Gingerlight sank to the ground and licked their fur. "You were the best parents ever.", she whispered. She promised them to come back and bury them. She looked around for survivors. She saw another flame-red body. *No. It couldn't be...* She went nearer. It was Foxtail. "No!", she screeched. She buried her nose in his fur. "Don't leave me..please.." A tail touched her cheek. She looked around. No one was there. *I'm sorry my love...But it was my destiny. Look after our kits.* Gingerlight saw a faint shadow of Foxtail rise into the air. Gingerlight felt like drowning herself to join her beloved. "Gingerlight.." Her name made her jump. She turned around to see Milkfur. And.. He was on the floor but he was breathing! Gingerlight licked his cheek. "Milkfur, I'm so glad you survived!" Milkfur shook his head. "I will die", he rasped, "it's my destiny. But... I must tell you something first, dear sister. The moment you were born, there was a prophecy. Light will shine ginger and save the clans. You are that light. And you will save the clans. Farewell, Gingerlight." His breathing became faint, and then it stopped altogether. Gingerlight stared at him with horror. How could she save the clans? Her kits wailed behind her. She felt like wailing too. She took a deep breath and began to pull all her clanmates next to each other. Snowfur, Snakecreek.. The only cat that wasn't there was Rainbow. But that didn't make Gingerlight's hopes very high. When she finally had pulled all of the cats next to eachother, she lay next to them, her kits resting by her belly, her tail resting on Milkfur and her nose buried in Foxtail's fur. And she sadly held vigil for her clanmates.

Chapter 18

Gingerlight miserably began to dig a deep hole. She was going to bury her clan. Sunkit, Dreamkit, Nightkit and Flamekit were snoozing soundly. Gingerlight dug and dug. "Need any help?", a familiar voice made her turn around. It was Frozengaze and her sister Falconheart.

"Frozengaze! You survived!"

Frozengaze's face fell. "Yes, but we're the only survivors of Segdeclan. We came to find somewhere for us to stay." When three were digging, it went noticeably faster. Soon, Gingerlight's clanmates were laying beneath her. Gingerlight carefully waked her kits. "We should find other survivors.", she explained to Frozengaze and Falconheart.

Falconheart nodded thoughtfully. "You and your kits are the only Lakeclans. We are the only Sedgeclans. Let's head to Volcanoclan." Gingerlight and Frozengaze nodded in agreement. They set off, the sound of Gingerlight's kits squabbling behind them. Suddenly, they heard a wailing mew. A small, gray kit was standing in the burnt grass. Gingerlight carefully approached her. "Hello. I'm Gingerlight from Lakeclan. And you?"

The little kit looked up at her and squeaked: "Riverkit from Volcanoclan!" Gingerlight looked at her thoughtfully. "Where are your clanmates?", she asked.

"Don't know."

Falconheart smiled. "Come with us. We'll help you find them."

Riverkit saw Gingerlight's kits. "Okay." So the 8 cats entered Volcanoclan's territory. The called and called, and suddenly, a group of cats appeared. "H..hello", one mewed, "I'm Emberflight and these are Brindleberry and Riverkit. I am sad to say no other cat out of our clan survived." Gingerlight bit her lip. Their only hope was

Berryclan now. If they didn't survive... They would all be... Rogues. Gingerlight gulped. She beckoned the others to follow her.

They made their way to Berryclan's marshy territory. The wind blew around their fur. Sound of paws made them look up. Two cats stood there. Gingerlight took deep breath. "How many of you survived?", she asked quietly. One of the cats sighted. "Just us two." Gingerlight's heart sank into her paws. What would they do now?

Chapter 19

Gingerlight looked at everyone. "We need a plan. We need to stick together, since we are the only survivors of the clans." For a long time, everyone was quiet and Gingerlight began to think that nothing would ever happen. Then, one of the Berryclan warriors, Silverwind, cleared his throat. "Umm.. Well in Leaf-bare, there were hardly any prey in our territory. We..well... There's another forest, after that thunderpath, we used to hunt there aswell. The fire might not have reached there." Everyone stared at her. Emberflight nodded in agreement. So did Grayswallow, Berryclan's medicne cat, and finally, everyone was ready to go. They set off. Gingerlight saw Riverkit struggling to keep up. "Here", Gingerlight mewed, crouching down, "ride on my back." Riverkit gratefully clambered on. Gingerlight saw her own kits chasing each other, full of energy. *They'll be ok,* she thought. Dreamkit wrinkled her nose. "What's that smell?"

"The thunderpath", Brindleberry answered, before Gingerlight could open her mouth. Sunkit shrank back. "I'm scared." Gingerlight licked her head. "Don't worry, I'll look after you." Riverkit jumped from her back. Emberflight looked around. "Ok. Silverwind, you go with Brindleberry and Riverkit. Grayswallow, you're with Falconheart, Frozengaze Dreamkit and Flamekit. Gingerlight, you take me, Nightkit and Sunkit." Everyone nodded, and got in line. Silverwind waited, and waited and then.. "Go!", she yowled. The cats ran. They made it safely to the other side. A monster went past. Grayswallow took her position with her group. They made it safely across. Gingerlight nervously stepped forward. She opened her mouth to scent the air- no monsters. "Let's go!", she called loudly. She stormed over the path, the others close behind. Suddenly, the scent of monsters hit Gingerlight like a rock. A rumbling came closer..."Quick!", she cried. She made it safely to the other side. The monster rumbled past. Gingerlight breathed, relieved. She looked around. "Where's Sunkit?", panic rose in her. But her clanmates weren't listening. They were staring on the thunderpath. There, a small, ginger body lay, still and... *No! She can't be dead!* Gingerlight

ran towards the thunderpath. Frozengaze pressed against her side. "She's gone", she whispered, "I'm so sorry."

"No!", Gingerlight yowled. She tore away from Frozengaze. She picked up the tiny body, and brought it to the strip of grass. Sunkit lay still, a trickle of blood running out of her mouth. "No..."

Foxtail's sweet scent washed around Gingerlight. *Don't worry. She's with me now.* Gingerlight calmed down slightly. Sunkit was in the safe paws of her father. Gingerlight lifted her head. Oh Starclan... I lost so much already. Why did you have to take Sunkit away aswell?

Chapter 20

Gingerlight soberly traipsed after the group. Sunkit had been buried that morning. Frozengaze fell back to talk to her.

"I'm sorry."

Gingerlight turned away, she felt ill.

The cats in front of her had stopped and were talking. "I guess we're one clan now.", Brindleberry mewed. Gingerlight nodded. She had forgotten that. *None of the leaders have survived,* she thought, *surely that must be a bad omen?* Emberflight looked around. "This will do nicely as a home!", he mewed more cheerful than Gingerlight felt. Everyone sat down. "Let's get to our main problem", Grayswallow mewed, "we need a leader." Grayswallow glanced at Brindleberry. No one said anything. No one wanted to be leader. Falconheart took a deep breath. "Grayswallow, Brindleberry, you're medicine cats. Have you had any omens recently? Grayswallow coughed nervously. "Well.. All medicine cats have being reviving the same prophecy for the same time: *Light will shine ginger, and save the clans*."

"Then it's settled", Frozengaze mewed, "Gingerlight's our leader."

The new clan began to cheer. "Gingerlight! Gingerlight!"

Gingerlight threw a look at the medicine cats. Surely it can't be as easy as that? But the two cats nodded and cheered.

Finally, Gingerlight bowed her head. "Okay. I accept. I'll go to the moonstone tonight. But first", she gulped, "we need a definite medicine cat. One of you two needs to become an apprentice again."

The two medicine cats left the group and began to talk quietly.

Gingerlight organised some patrols to mark the new borders. "Can't

we have the whole forest?", Emberclaw had asked. But Gingerlight had shook her head. "No. There are rogues and foxes here. They need space as well." Emberflight dipped his head respectfully.

As it became sunhigh, and the fresh borders were made, Grayswallow and Brindleberry returned. "We have decided", Grayswallow announced, "that I will be the medicine cat, and Brindleberry will change her duties to a warrior's." Gingerlight flicked her tail surprised.

"I was once a warrior", Brindleberry explained, "but I broke my leg, and my... *Former* clan thought I would never be able to walk properly again. So I had to become a medicine cat. But my leg has healed again." It was true. She walked without the slightest limp.

"Grayswallow. Will you come with me to the moonstone?", Gingerlight asked.

Grayswallow nodded. "It will be a hard journey though", she warned, "since we have no travel herbs. Don't you want to wait?"

Gingerlight shook her head. "Our clan needs to stay strong. And a strong clan needs a leader."

Grayswallow peered at all of the cats. "But first", she urged, "you need to choose a deputy."

Gingerlight hesitated. She didn't know many of these cats well. Her gaze fell on Frozengaze. *Of course!*

"Frozengaze, will you be my deputy?"

Frozengaze's eyes shone. "Yes!"

Chapter 21

Gingerlight traipsed after Grayswallow, feeling her eyelids droop. She forced her self to keep them open. Her belly rumbled. Grayswallow paused. "We're here", she said, looking up at the sky, "we have some time to eat." Gingerlight nodded, raising her head to sniff the air. She smelled vole. She dropped into a hunters crouch, sliding closer to the vole. She waited, and then leaped, slamming her paw on its neck. She picked it up and brought it back to a pleased Grayswallow. "Marigold and Juniper.", she said, tucking in to the vole. Gingerlight took several bites, the rumbling in her belly fading. The moon rise over them. Grayswallow flicked he tail. "Let's go in." They entered the cave, it was dark and musky. Gingerlight blinked, trying to see something. "Quickly!", a voice called, "It's already moonhigh!" Gingerlight stumbled further, and suddenly, she was blinded by the moon, shining in through the cave. She pressed her nose to the cold moonstone. She closed her eyes. When she next opened them, she looked around to see a group of cats gather around her. Grayswallow stood next to Gingerlight, smiling. "Welcome, Gingerlight.", mewed a cat, "we have been waiting for you many seasons." A white tabby stepped forward. *Daisyfur*! "With this life I give you luck. You will need it." Visions flashed through Gingerlight's mind. Her birth, her apprenticeship.... Next, her father stepped forward. "With this life I give you courage, a leader like you can not have enough of it." Again, visions shot through Gingerlight's mind as Thunderfoot touched her nose. He stepped back. Milkfur stepped towards her, his eyes shining. "With this life I give you hope. Do no forget: Even in the darkest times, hope can be found." Gingerlight was starting to get used to the visions in her head. Next, it was Foxtail. Gingerlight's heart ached. "With this life I give you love.", then, he whispered, "I'm waiting for you." Gingerlight touched his nose, letting once again visions rush trough her. Butterflymist took his place. "This life will give you strength, though, you have more strength than I ever imagined." Next, was Redblossom. She gave Gingerlight a life for kindness. Moonstar padded forwards. "I'm proud of you", she whispered, "we all are. With this life I give you good training. Your apprentices will

become great warriors." And finally, Sunkit. Gingerlight swallowed. "S..Sunkit..", she squealed. Sunkit smiled at her sadly. "With this life I give you friendship. Rely on that when times are hard." She bounded back to the group of shimmering cats. Gingerlight, no Gingerstar, hardly heard the cheers, as she was already beginning to wake up.

"Gingerstar! Gingerstar! Gingerstar!"

Chapter 22

"Gingerstar! Gingerstar!", cheers rose up to Gingerstar once more. She was standing on the ledge to her new nest, the new highrock. Gingerstar beamed. "In this first meeting as leader, u would like to do a ceremony. Riverkit, Nightkit, Dreamkit and Flamekit, step forward." The kits exchanged an exited glance. They stumbled forward, tripping over their paws.
"Riverkit. You will be known as Riverpaw. Er...I will be your mentor." Gingerstar struggled for words. She hadn't planned this beforehand. "Nightkit. You will be called Nightpaw. Your mentor will be Emberflight. Dreamkit", the words were flowing out of her mouth now, "your name will be Dreampaw. Your mentor will be Frozengaze. And Flamekit, your name shall be Flamepaw. Silverwind will mentor you." The four trembled with exitement, running off to touch noses with their mentor. Riverpaw respectfully touched Gingerstar's. Gingerstar was about to end the meeting, when Grayswallow called 'stop!' All eyes turned towards her. "Since Gingerstar is now our leader, I think it is only fair that this clan shall be called Gingerclan." Some cats muttered in agreement. Gingerstar bit back her shock. "That sounds horrible!", she muttered to herself. Then, she shook her head. "I won't allow it." Grayswallow shrugged. "If you wish. But you should name the clan." Gingerstar hesitated. She gazed at her clan. She noticed that the cats were still stained in ash, not being able to wash themselves yet, and that gave her an idea. "I name this clan Cinderclan, after the cinder and ash from the fire that drove us here."

Everyone began to cheer again. "Cinderclan! Cinderclan! Cinderclan!"

Chapter 23

"Gingerstar? Are you free to lead a hunting patrol?" Gingerstar spun around to see Frozengaze organising patrols. She nodded.

"Ok. Could you take Falconheart, Riverpaw and Brindleberry?" Gingerstar nodded a second time. She gathered together the three cats and lead them out of camp. Several moons had passed since Gingerstar had become leader, and the camp was slowly but surely building up. No foxes or badgers dared to come near them. Prey was their only problem, but newleaf was close. Riverpaw bounded forwards. She disappeared out of sight. Gingerstar didn't dare call because of the prey.

"Gingerstar?" Riverpaw came back. "There's a cat here wanting to see you." Gingerstar mind raced. Had another clan cat survived after all? Maybe a few? She quickened her pace. A light brown she-cat, she didn't smell of the clans, stood opposite her. Gingerstar heart sank. The small cat smiled shyly. "Hello. I'm Bubble. I'm a rogue from around here. I'd like to join your clan."

Gingerstar blinked surprised. "I'm Gingerstar, leader of Cinderclan. I invite you back, and...I'll question you."

The return with a rogue, but no prey was greeted by silence. Gingerstar led Bubble into her den, before anyone would yowl in complaint.

Gingerstar was impressed with Bubble. Of course she could hunt and fight, being a rogue, and Gingerstar came to a conclusion. She stood on the high rocks. "All cats, old enough to...survive a fire, gather around the high rock! There is an apprentice to be made."

Chapter 24

"Bubblepaw! Bubblepaw!" Gingerstar dipped her head towards Bubblepaw. She hoped it was the right thing, making Falconheart Bubblepaw's mentor. She dipped her head towards Bubblepaw, and ending the meeting. Gingerstar's hunting patrol left the camp again, they still needed to catch something. Bubblepaw accompanied them. Falconheart suggested splitting up. Falconheart, Brindleberry and Bubblepaw went one way, Gingerstar and Riverpaw the other. A pigeon settled itself on a very low branch. Gingerstar nudged her apprentice. "See if you can catch that." Riverpaw tensed her muskles and jumped, crashing into the bird. It squawked feebly. Riverpaw nipped it in the neck.

"Well done! But next time, you should jump a bit higher..."

Gingerstar continued to correct Riverpaw's tiny mistakes. Gingerstar loved mentoring. It took her mind off things. And she was fond of her apprentice. Gingerstar was painfully aware that she wonder be an apprentice forever. But she would make Riverpaw the best warrior she could.

Later on, they met up with the others again. Brindleberry had caught a mouse, and Bubblepaw had helped Falconheart catch a vole. Riverpaw had also driven a mouse right into Gingerstar's paws. Gingerstar was pleased. Newleaf was definitely coming. They walked back to camp. *Cinderclan is turning out nice*, Gingerstar thought, *maybe this really is our destiny.*

Chapter 25

Frozengaze entered Gingerstar's den, her eyes full of grief. "Gingerstar? Y..you might want to see this." Gingerstar wondered what made Frozengaze so sad. She followed her out of camp, to the kittypet borders. Three cats stood there. Two females, one black and one brown, and a brown tom. They looked exactly like Frozengaze and Falconheart. Falconheart was also there, trembling. Gingerstar looked from Frozengaze to Falconheart. "This isn't...your family?"

The three cats nodded.

"I'm Blackie."

"Blaze."

"Alf."

Gingerstar noticed something strange in their names. "But they're kittypet names! You're kittypets now?"

Blackie nodded. "It's our destiny. We're happy there."

"Why don't you join Cinderclan?"

Blackie shook her head. "As I said, it's our destiny." A white tom appeared. "Where have you been? I've been looking for you everywhere...." He trailed off as he saw Frozengaze. "Hi. I'm Sam."

"Frozengaze." Frozengaze's eyes were locked on Sam. No one moved or said anything. Finally Alf beckoned the other kittypets. "We should go. It was nice seeing you." They walked away. Gingerstar saw Frozengaze's look follow them, or more precise, Sam. Gingerstar pressed against her side. "Let's go home."

She understood very well how she felt. She wanted to comfort her, but she as lost for words. She only managed to say: "I'm sorry." Frozengaze miserably sighed. "It's not your fault. It's mine. I should of stayed with them when the fire started." Gingerstar didn't think

that was true, but didn't say so. And in silence, they walked back to camp, depressed.

Chapter 26

Gingerstar yawned, walking out of her den. It had been a full moon night, and Gingerstar missed the big excitement of the gathering. But there was nothing they could do. She lay down on the high rock, watching her clanmates wake up. One by one they traipsed out of their dens, waking up their apprentices, waiting for Frozengaze to organise patrols. But Frozengaze didn't step out of the Warriors den like everybody else. Gingerstar began to worry. She stood up, quickly bounding over to the den. A cluster of cats had already gathered there. They hadn't dared to gone in. Gingerstar carefully padded inside. "Frozengaze?" Frozengaze lay there, quietly snoring. Gingerstar nudged her. "Frozengaze? Wake up!" Frozengaze stirred, groaning.

"Are you alright?"

"I'm fine, Gingerstar."

Frozengaze stood up, yawning. She brushed against Gingerstar as she stood up. Gingerstar caught a smell of something familiar on her fur. She frantically tried to remember what it was. Frozengaze was organising patrols, but her voice was drowsy. Gingerstar noticed how ruffled up her fur was. She looked like she had been up all night. Gingerstar suddenly had an idea. She found a small tuft of fur in Frozengaze's nest. It smelled of that unknown thing. She carefully carried it to the medicine den.

"Greyswallow? I need you."

Greyswallow appeared from behind a slab of stone. "How can I help, Gingerstar?"

"What does this smell of?"

Greyswallow sniffed at the tuft of fur.

"Hmmm.. Strange. That's catmint."

A/N: I just wanted to thank everybody for over 1k!!!! I'm so happy, I never thought it would get this far.

Chapter 27

"Catmint?", Gingerstar echoed. She remembered that catmint grew near twoleg dens. She once again saw Frozengaze's grief-stricken face she had seen seven sunrises ago. She must of been secretly visiting her family in the night. Gingerstar couldn't blame her. She would of done the same. But it had to stop. Gingerstar turned to Greyswallow. "This makes sense now. Thank you."

Frozengaze was being pestered by Dreampaw.

"Can't we go hunting?"

"Not now."

"And battle training?"

"Maybe later."

"Can we join a patrol?"

"No."

"Or collect moss?"

"Not right now."

Dreampaw's tail drooped as she wondered off.

"Frozengaze, I'd like a word with you."

Gingerstar's words surprised Frozengaze, Gingerstar saw that.

"Is it because of Dreampaw? I can take her out if you want me to!"

Gingerstar laughed softly. "No, it's about something completly different. Let's go in my den." Together, they walked up. Gingerstar could sense Frozengaze's fear. Gingerstar took a deep breath. "You've been meeting your family at night, haven't you?"

"Gingerstar, but my sister is here, in Cinderclan!"

"You know what I mean, Frozengaze. Don't deny it. I won't punish you."

Frozengaze's shoulders sagged. "Yes I have.", she whispered meekly. Gingerstar nodded slowly. "I won't punish you. But promise me, you won't do it again."

Frozengaze carefully made sure her gaze didn't meet Gingerstar's. "I promise."

Gingerstar hoped she would stay away from the twoleg place. After all, a best friend would keep their promises, right?

Chapter 28

Emberflight was talking to Nightpaw when Gingerstar walked past.

"Hey Gingerstar!"

Gingerstar looked back.

"Do you and Riverpaw want to come hunting with us?"

Gingerstar was slightly surprised. "Er...alright, why not?"

Gingerstar called for her apprentice, and together they walked through the forest. The birch place came into view and Emberflight smiled at the apprentices. "Ok. The one to hunt one squirrel, a mouse and a thrush first wins. The two scampered off. Gingerstar sat down on the moist floor. Emberflight sat down next to her. There was a gleam in his eyes. Gingerstar's stomach churned. She didn't know why. She gazed at Emberflight and no one spoke. Finally, Gingerstar found her speech: "You look a lot like my former mate, Foxtail." The gleam in Emberflight's eyes faded. "Oh. Do I?"

Gingerstar wondered what she had said wrong. Before she could ask, Nightpaw came running up, a thrush in her mouth and a mouse clamped under her chin. She dropped them, panting.

"Just a squirrel to go!", she said gleefully. She bounded off. Riverpaw dashed in, a squirrel in her mouth. "I've got a mouse too!", she mumbled through a mouthful of fur, "I buried it." She dropped the squirrel, and went to retrieve the mouse. Soon, Riverpaw returned with a thrush and a mouse. "I win, I win!" Nightpaw came, without a squirrel. "I couldn't find any!", she complained.

"It doesn't matter. You both did very well. You can have the first pick from the fresh-kill pile. Gingerstar picked up the two mice by their tails. They were greeted by congratulations when they

arrived at camp.

"Wow, so much prey!"

"That's great!"

"Newleaf has come at last!"

"We won't have to starve anymore!"

Gingerstar lay the mice down. Newleaf was really here.

Chapter 29

"Gingerstar, I'd like to talk."

Gingerstar glanced at Frozengaze. Her belly was swollen, Gingerstar had been expecting her to come for a while.

"Sure, let's go to my den."

"No, I meant, I'd like to talk to the clan."

Gingerstar couldn't hide her surprise. "What? Well, if you want to." Gingerstar bounded up to the highrock in two massive leaps. "All cats old enough to survive a fire, gather around the high-rocks!"

Cats gathered themselves under the rock. Finally, Gingerstar saw it was time to begin. "Frozengaze would like to talk." Confused murmurs rose from the crowd. Gingerstar felt as confused as they were. She joined the crowd, watching Frozengaze, who took a deep breath.

"I..have been secretly meeting my parents and sister, in the night." Some cats gasped. "I did it for a while, until Gingerstar noticed, and begged me to stop. I gave her my word. I never met up with my family again. But with someone else. When I met my family, another cat was there. Sam. I fell in love with him. After promising Gingerstar I met up with him, night after night, and soon, I was expecting his kits." All eyes were set on Frozengaze's belly. Frozengaze continued, fear in her eyes. "We agreed that our kits should live with both parents. But Sam could never become a warrior. It's not in his nature. I...I'm leaving. I'm becoming a kittypet." She gazed at Gingerstar, a pleasing look in her eyes. "I..I'm sorry. Goodbye." And she ran into the shadows. Everyone looked at Gingerstar. They were expecting her to choose a new deputy. Gingerstar trembled. She gazed at her clan. She trusted her clanmates with her life, but none of them were really built out to be a deputy. Finally, Gingerstar lowered her head sighing. "Fine", she said weakly, "the new deputy will be Emberflight." She quickly went

into her den, grief welling up in her. *Not my best friend too!*

Chapter 30

Gingerstar was sitting in the sun, enjoying the last rays of sunshine before dusk settled in. She watched the apprentices tumble about, and she realised that they needed kits. What's a clan without them? Frozengaze's kits would of been a perfect touch to the clan. But Frozengaze had made her choice. She stood up, as Brindleberry padded over. She had been made Dreampaw's mentor when Frozengaze had left. "Gingerstar. I just wanted to say, that the apprentices, well except Bubblepaw, should do their final assessment soon. They're getting really good." Gingerstar nodded in agreement. "You're right. I will inform their mentors and they can do their final assessment in a few days."

Gingerstar crouched down, keeping her eyes on Riverpaw. She crept up on a giant blackbird, then in a flash, pinning it down. Riverpaw quickly killed it. Gingerstar was proud of her apprentice. She emerged out of the bush, waving her tail at Riverpaw to say that she'd done enough. The next task, was to pair up the apprentices, to see how they could work together. Riverpaw and Flamepaw worked together like Gingerstar had never seen before. Riverpaw chased a squirrel into Flamepaw's claws, and he caught it quickly. The fresh-kill pile was already getting bigger. Finally, Gingerstar stood face-to-face against Riverpaw in the training hollow. "First, I'm going to attack you. You have to defence yourself. The second time you have to attack." Riverpaw nodded nervously. Gingerstar waited and when she knew Riverpaw was at least expecting it, she jumped forward, pinning Riverpaw down. Riverpaw struggled beneath her, but couldn't quite get up. Gingerstar, dissapointed, was about to get off her, when Riverpaw cleverly nipped her in her leg, and Gingerstar fell off her, surprised. Riverpaw took her chance, and pressed a forepaw on top of her chest. Gingerstar gave her a sign to let her up. "Now you attack me." Riverpaw didn't wait for Gingerstar to get distracted, but a immediately tried to attack Gingerstar. Gingerstar was therefore ready and ducked as Riverpaw tried to do a fore-paw slash. Riverpaw slashed out into the air, lost her balance and landed on her back. Gingerstar placed her two front paws on her chest.

Riverpaw closed her eyes, ashamed. Gingerstar got up. "Your assessment is over. You can return to camp. Get some fresh-kill and some rest."

"Ok."

And Riverpaw scampered off. Gingerstar swallowed. Riverpaw had shown a massive effort in hunting, but had the battling been enough?

Chapter 31

Gingerstar listened to the reports of the apprentices. They had done well. Well enough. She dismissed the few cats and called her usual call. "All cats old enough to survive a fire, gather around the high-rock!" Cats gathered around, clearly happy. Warrior ceremony's were always welcome. Gingerstar double checked if the apprentices were there. "We are here to celebrate that our four oldest apprentices have passed their final assessment." Her voice was drowned by exited squeals. Gingerstar chuckled. "Dreampaw, Riverpaw, Flamepaw and Nightpaw, please step up." Gingerstar noticed that they were trying not to bound up like kits. "Do you promise to uphold the secrets of your clan, even at the cost of your life?"

"I do!", squealed Dreampaw.

"So do I.", trembled Flamepaw

"I..I do.", squeaked Nightpaw.

"Yes.", whispered Riverpaw.

"Then Dreampaw, you will be Dreamsky. Your clan honours you for your good heart and your swiftness. Flamepaw, you shall be known as Flameclaw. We honour you for your bravery and your kindness. Nightpaw, you shall be called Nightblossom. We treasure your kindness and your quick reactions. And finally," Gingerstar turned to her now former apprentice, "Riverpaw. You will be known as Rivercloud. Your clan honours your good heart and your great hunting." Everyone cheered and called the new names. As the new warriors stepped back, Gingerstar raised her muzzle, and chanted the new names into the sky. *Are you watching Foxtail? Our kits are now warriors!*

Chapter 32

Gingerstar felt her stomach turn backflips as she stared at the ginger tom. He reminded her of Foxtail. She loved him. He stared back, the usual glint shining bright in his eyes. He winked at her. He knew what she was thinking about. Gingerstar laughed, almost relieved. He smiled back at her. He beckoned her to follow him. They padded out of camp together, chasing each other, playing like kits and giggling. They ran out of the forest, forgetting about borders for once. Just this once. Gingerstar felt happy. She hadn't felt this happy in ages. Finally, they sat in the meadow, watching the sun go down. The Stars appeared bright in the sky. *Foxtail. I know you just wanted to make me happy*. Gingerstar winded his tail around his. "Gingerstar. I've only just met you. But you are my true love. Do you want to be my mate?"

They walked back into camp, their heads together. Cats looked at them, surprised. They crowded around the two, whispering. Gingerstar felt like she'd explode. "Me and Emberflight are now mates!", she announced.

A/N: I know this chapter was really short. Sorry! The next chapter will be more exiting, I promise!

Chapter 33

Gingerstar sat on her own. She suddenly wished Frozengaze was here, her best friend. She raised her head, looking directly at her ancestors. "Oh Starclan, in spite of having a clan to look after, and a mate, I feel more alone than ever. Help me please."

A voice behind Gingerstar made her jump: "Well, you're lucky I'm here." Gingerstar spun around. Frozengaze stood there, three tiny kits trailing behind her.

"Frozengaze! What...what are you doing here?"

Frozengaze's eyes filled with grief immediately. "Once a warrior, always a warrior. Sam understood."

Gingerstar pressed against Frozengaze. "I'm so glad you're back.", she turned her head to the kits. "What are they called?"

Frozengaze called her kits softly. "Gingerstar, these are Skykit, Fangkit and Wolfkit. Kits, this is your leader, Gingerstar."

The clan welcomed Frozengaze back without hesitation.

"Emberflight will stay deputy", Gingerstar called, "since Frozengaze will be staying in the nursery."

Gingerstar went for a walk, and Frozengaze told about everything that had happened.

"...but as the kits were born, I began to miss clan life even more. And finally, I couldn't stand it anymore. Sam *didn't* understand. I had to explain over and over again. He got angry, and...and he never wants to see me again. And, oh Gingerstar, I'm so glad to be back!"

Gingerstar smiled to herself.

"So am I, Frozengaze, so am I."

Chapter 34

Frozengaze stood at the kittypet border, staring into space. She stood there for a long time, and finally Gingerstar couldn't help herself. "What's the matter, Frozengaze?", she asked carefully. Frozengaze didn't turn around. Gingerstar heard her sigh.

"When I was a kittypet, they called me Jingo. I liked that name, because it didn't remind me of my past. Every time someone says the name 'Frozengaze', I remember my family out there, my clan that died. Frozengaze turned around. "I want a new name, that doesn't remind me of the fire." Gingerstar nodded. "I'll see what I can do."

Gingerstar caught Grayswallow as she was leaving to the moonstone. "Greyswallow. There's something I want you to ask Starclan..." Gingerstar quickly explained Frozengaze's wish. Greyswallow nodded seriously, then set off. Gingerstar bounded up to her nest, falling asleep immediatley. In her dream, a voice was speaking to her. *Light has shone ginger and saved the clans. Now Thunder, Shadow, Wind, River and Sky must unite and the clans will return once more...*

Gingerstar awoke with a start. Had that been a dream, or a prophecy? She had to see Greyswallow. Greyswallow had returned not so long ago. She was pondering on her own. "Greyswallow?", Gingerstar quickly told Greyswallow about her dream. Greyswallow's eyes flashed. "When I went to the moonstone, Starclan told me the same thing. I hope there's not going to be another fire or soemthing" Gingerstar told Greyswallw to tell her if anything else hapened. Gingerstar turned to leave.

"Oh, Gingerstar? Starclan says it's part of Frozengaze's destiny to change her name."

"And with the power of Starclan, I change your name to Jingostep."

"JIngostep! Jingostep!"

Jingostep grinned, and for the first time since she had saw her parents as kittypets, she looked happy.

A/N: Sorry, this was quite a boring chapter... I promise, in Chapter 36 (yes, 36, not 35) the story will get exiting again.

Chapter 35

"Emberflight! Come in and see your kits!"

Emberflight appeared at the nursery entrance. "Gingerstar? Are you ok?"

"I'm fine, come and help me name them."

Gingerstar pulled three kits closer to herself. A ginger tom, a black tom and a cream coloured she-cat.

Emberflight nuzzled Gingerstar's ear. "Let's call the cream one Willowkit." Gingerstar nodded in agreement. "And the black one Stormkit." Her voice went quiet. "And the ginger one Foxkit." Emberflight stiffened slightly. Gingerstar knew what he was thinking. Foxtail was Gingerstar's former mate. Then, he bent down and licked the tiny head. "Let's call him Thunderkit, after your father."

"Okay" Gingerstar was happy he hadn't said anything to her suggestion.

The kits grew up fast, the next day their eyes were open. Six ice blue eyes stared up at Gingerstar, pleading for milk. Soon, they were tumbling about with their denmates Wolfkit, Fangkit and Skykit, the almost six moon year old kits from Jingostep. And before Gingerstar knew it, they didn't need her milk anymore. Their favourite food was squirrel, they just couldn't get enough of it.

"Cute little furballs", Jingostep muttered one day. Those words made Gingerstar think of Reblossom. "I know", Gingerstar said, smiling.

Chapter 36

Gingerstar opened her eyes. Around her, Starclan's beautiful grounds appeared around her. A jet black tom padded up to her.

"Is it my time?", blurted out Gingerstar. She had been awaiting this for a while now. It had been many seasons since she had received her nine lives, and she was on her last one. Gingerstar wasn't ashamed to say that she was getting old, she would have to die sooner or later. The tom shook his head. "Not yet, Gingerstar. But soon. You have a last task to do. You must complete the prophecy." Gingerstar stared at him with surprise. "But I did! I saved the cats! The cats of Cinderclan!"

"Exactly. But saving cats and saving clans isn't the same thing now, is it?"

Gingerstar looked at him in bewilderment.

"Think", he whispered.

Suddenly, a thought dropped into Gingerstar's mind like a stone. "You mean I have to..."

He nodded. "There were always destined to be five clans, maybe six." Starclan began to fade.

"Go on", the black tom urged quietly, "go back and save the clans"

And as Gingerstar slowly opened her eyes, a prophecy echoed in her ears once more:

Light has shone ginger and saved the clans. Now Thunder, Shadow, Wind, River and Sky must unite and the clans will return once more...

Chapter 37

Gingerstar stirred, feeling older than ever. She recalled her dream, and suddenly, she knew what to do. She stepped out, and for the last time, she called her clan together. "All cats old enough to survive a fire, gather around the high-rock!" Cats were yawning, Gingerstar could see that everyone's fur was still ruffled up from sleeping. She spotted Thunderstorm, her kit, Skylight, Jingostep's son, Windblossom, daughter of Bubbleheart and Wolfclaw and Shadowfoot, Rivercloud and Flameclaw's kit. And finally, Rivercloud herself.There was no time to waste. She took a deep breath.

"Cats of Cinderclan. There was always destined to be six clans in the forest. Never just one. We must create the new clans, clans that will stay forever." Gingerstar smiled at the confused faces. This was only the beginning. "Thunderstorm, Windblossom, Rivercloud, Shadowfoot and Skylight. Step forward." The five cats did as they were told, but they clearly didn't know what to expect. Gingerstar turned her clan. "These are your new leaders. I did not choose them, there was a prophecy made many moons ago. There will be a clan in memory of each clan we've known so far." Gingerstar bowed her head to the new leaders.

Skylight spoke first: "My mother Jingostep was a Sedgeclan cat. But her loyalty lies in Cinderclan. I create Skyclan in memory of Cinderclan."

Shadowfoot stepped forward. "My mother Rivercloud was born in Volcanoclan. That's why Shadowclan will be created in memory of Volcanoclan."

Next, Windblossom spoke:" My ancestors are Sedgeclan. I may not have lived there myself, but I know it was a wonderful clan. Sedgeclan will be remembered forever in Windclan."

Then Thunderstorm:" I was born here, in Cinderclan. My mother Gingerstar, was the best leader I could of imagined. She was born in

Lakeclan. Thunderclan will be Lakeclan's memory."

All eyes turned to Rivercloud. "I was born in Volcanoclan", she admitted, "but my father was half-clan, half Berryclan to be precise, which makes me part Berryclan too. I create Riverclan in memory of Berryclan."

Gingerstar addressed her cats for the last time. "Tonight, all five leaders will travel to the moonstone together. But now, it's your desicion. You have to decide which clan you want to be in. Follow your heart."

Chapter 38

Everyone was talking in hushed whispers. Deciding where to go. Saying goodbye.

"I..I think I'm going to Shadowclan", Emberflight said.

"Skyclan for me", whispered Jingostep.

"I don't really have a choice", laughed Rivercloud, "but I don't mind. Riverclan is the clan for me."

The three cats turned to Gingerstar. "Which clan are you joining, Gingerstar?", they said in union. Gingerstar sighed. It was time to say good bye. "I'm joining the sixth clan", she mewed.

Jingostep went to her side. "But Gingerstar, I was going to ask you about that. There is only five clans in the forest now."

Gingerstar shook her head. "There has always been another clan with us." Gingerstar saw Milkfur, Foxtail, Daisyfur, she saw everyone who had given her a life.

"A clan made out of cats with stars around their paws", Gingerstar whispered quietly.

"What? Gingerstar, no!", Emberflight pressed against his mate's side. "You can't go!"

Gingerstar shook her head. "It's my time."

And she felt her body collapse beneath her, as Starclan carried her spirit into the sky. "May Starclan be with you", she whispered, letting it echo around the camp. "And goodbye."

Gingerstar's eyelids fluttered open. She looked around, hoping to catch a glimpse of Milkfur, or Foxtail.

"Gingerstar. How...nice to see you." Gingerstar spun around and

looked into a face she'd thought she'd never see again. Cedarfrost.

"Go away, Cedarfrost!", Gingerstar spat. But just Cedarfrost laughed scornfully. "I still have a score to settle with you. You ruined my plan, Gingerstar. You were supposed to mistrust everyone, as a kit. So later, you wouldn't want to save the clans. There wouldn't of been these mouse-brained new clans. And now, the *dawn of the clans* will come. And it's all your fault, Gingerstar!" And with that, Cedarfrost pounced on her. Gingerstar suddenly felt anger shoot through her. And without wanting it, she lashed out at his throat and Cedarfrost crumpled to the ground, and began to fade into nothing...

"Not bad"

Gingerstar twirled around, hoping no one had saw her do that. She already felt bad. Milkfur smiled at her.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to.."

"No worries, no one will know"

Milkfur winked. He rested his tail on her shoulder. "Come dear sister", he mewed,"Welcome to Starclan."

Epilogue

Riverstar sighed as Shadowstar stormed off. What had happened to him? He was different. Like everyone else. The whole of Shadowclan was becoming more hostile. More mysterious. Windclan was becoming shy, and they could run fast. Very fast. Thunderclan was becoming, well, so friendly, it was suspicious. And Riverstar had noticed that her clan had picked up a taste for fish, and enjoyed swimming. Riverstar had to admit she liked fish and swimming too. Everyone was changing. Riverstar remembered that night where she had received her nine lives. She remembered the life Gingerstar had gave her.

"I give you a life for your good heart. Your heart is perfect, and when you are in dark times, let it decide for you." Gingerstar had turned away, but as she did, she had whispered something in her ear. "The dawn of the clans is close..."

Riverstar had not known what she had meant then. But now she did. The clans were getting their personalities. This was it. This was the dawn of the clans.

A/N: Hi everyone!!! I'm really sad to say that this story is finished, I'm so sad, I've had lots of fun writing it. A thanks to all my readers, but a SPECIAL THANKS to @Moonpaw_Dusk and @Scarstar18, who really supported me all the way! Thanks!!! I won't be writing another warriors fanfic. (Well, not right now anyway😭)...sorry!! The next big project I'm going to write is a story called 'A wolf's soul'(no, it's not a fanfiction) Well, again, THANKYOU FOR READING!!!

~Frozenpaw